



Enriching Our Native Way of Life

April 15, 2014

Senator Pete Kelly
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Kevin Meyer
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 518
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Anna Fairclough
Vice-Chair, Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 514
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Mike Dunleavy
Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 510
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Click Bishop
Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Donny Olson
Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 11
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Public Education Funding

Dear Members of Senate Finance Committee:

Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) writes in support of increasing the base student allocation by \$400 in FY 2015, an additional \$125 in FY 2016, and \$125 again in FY 2017.

The base student allocation amount has not been raised since 2011. A \$400 increase this coming fiscal year will raise school funding enough to offset the inflation that has occurred over the last three years and will enable schools to retain its current teacher levels and potentially hire back some of the positions eliminated since 2011. The additional \$125 increases sought for FY 2016 and FY 2017 represent 2% increases which will offset inflation and provide a measure of stability to school district funding.

Adequate school funding is a state-wide issue that challenges small schools in rural Alaska as well as large schools in urban Alaska. Accordingly, this should be an issue that unites all of us. While BBNC understands and is concerned by the fact that Alaska faces potential budget shortfalls over the foreseeable future, we do not believe we can afford to underfund our school systems. The surest way to support the long-term economic sustainability of

Alaska is to create superior schools that produce a resourceful, educated and overachieving citizenry and workforce.

Please sufficiently fund our schools. Enact legislation that raises the base student allocation by \$650 over the next three fiscal years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "April Ferguson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

April Ferguson
Sr. Vice-President and General Counsel